

## Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

OPR-02 RSR-01 /092 W

----- 093501

P R 302110Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6788

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

COMNAVBASE GTMO CUBA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 1294

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, HA

SUBJ: GOH SECURITY PRECAUTIONS FOLLOWING NATIONAL PALACE FIRE

REF: (A) P-AU-P 1286; (B) P-AU-P 1262

SUMMARY: SINCE JULY 23 FIRE IN NATIONAL PALACE ARMORY, THE GOH HAS INTENSIFIED SECURITY PRECAUTIONS AND MOUNTED SEVERAL HIGHLY VISIBLE DEMONSTRATIONS OF FORCE IN PORT AU PRINCE, INCLUDING A MASS RALLY OF DUVALIERIST MILITIA JULY 29. GOH APPEARS EMBARRASSED BY THE FIRE AND CONCERNED FOR POSSIBLE SECURITY IMPLICATIONS, BUT NOT ALARMED. DESPITE INTENSIFIED SECURITY MEASURES, ATMOSPHERE IN PORT AU PRINCE OUTSIDE PALACE REMAINS GENERALLY CALM AND NORMAL. END SUMMARY.

1. ON JULY 29 THE GOH STAGED PARADES AND CEREMONIES THROUGHOUT HAITI COMMEMORATING THE ANNUAL "DAY OF THE VSN" ("THE NATIONAL SECURITY VOLUNTEERS," OR DUVALIERIST MILITIA). IN PORT AU PRINCE THOUSANDS OF BLUE-DENIMED MILITIAMEN AND WOMEN, MANY TRUCKED IN FROM THE PROVINCES, MASSED BEFORE THE NATIONAL PALACE TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER LAUDING THE VSN AS "INCORRUPTIBLE DEFENDERS OF THE DUVALIERIST REVOLUTION" AND "BUILDERS OF THE NEW HAITI." ONLY REFERENCE TO PALACE FIRE WAS A  
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STATEMENT THAT VSN HAD RALLIED TO PALACE WHEN ALARM

SOUNDED TO FORM TOGETHER WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD AN "IMPRESSIVE SHIELD" AROUND THE PRESIDENT. OTHERWISE, SPEECH CONTAINED ONLY USUAL PLATITUDES.

2. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE IN GOVERNMENT THAT GOH ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO FORGO LARGE-SCALE VSN DAY CELEBRATIONS THIS YEAR FOR FINANCIAL REASONS, BUT DECIDED AT VIRTUALLY THE LAST MINUTE (JULY 27) TO MOUNT MASS VSN DAY DEMONSTRATIONS AS A SHOW OF FORCE AFTER EMBARRASSMENT OF PALACE FIRE. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, ORDERS WERE FLASHED TO ALL PROVINCIAL COMMANDERS TO STAGE LOCAL VSN DAY OBSERVANCE ONLY A DAY OR TWO BEFORE THE CEREMONIES TOOK PLACE. SOURCE FURTHER REPORTS THAT (A) ALL REGIME SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN ON "FULL ALERT" STATUS SINCE JULY 23; (B) THE PALACE IS OFFICIALLY TELLING FOLLOWERS THE FIRE WAS CAUSED BY SHORT CIRCUIT IN VENTILATOR, BUT NONETHELESS PRIVATELY IS SUSPICIOUS OF POSSIBLE SABOTAGE; (C) THE PALACE IS CONCERNED FOR IMPLICATIONS OF FIRE (I.E. POSSIBLE SABOTAGE OR ENCOURAGEMENT THE FIRE MIGHT GIVE TO ANTI-REGIME PLOTTING) BUT IS NOT ALARMED; (D) PALACE SUSPICIONS HAVE NOT YET FOCUSED ON ANY PARTICULAR INDIVIDUALS IN HAITI; AND (E) NO ARRESTS HAVE BEEN MADE.

3. LAST-MINUTE VSN DAY CELEBRATION IS IN LINE WITH OTHER MEASURES GOH HAS TAKEN IN PAST WEEK AMOUNTING TO VISIBLE DEMONSTRATIONS OF FORCE AND INCREASED VIGILANCE; THE JULY 28 FLY-OVER OF AIR CORPS T-28S (REPORTED REFTTEL); STRENGTHENING OF MILITARY PATROLS IN VICINITY OF THE PALACE; AND POSTING VSN GUARDS AT GAS STATIONS AND RADIO STATIONS. DATT INFORMED BY SOURCES IN HAITIAN AIR CORPS THAT T-28S WERE ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TO RETURN DIRECTLY TO BOWEN FIELD FROM TESTING FLIGHT TO THE NORTH OF HAITI, BUT WHILE IN THE AIR ON THEIR WAY BACK TO PORT AU PRINCE PILOTS RECEIVED ORDERS FROM THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF TO MAKE PASSES OVER CITY.

4. DESPITE INTENSIFIED SECURITY PRECAUTIONS, ATMOSPHERE IN PORT AU PRINCE REMAINS GENERALLY CALM AND OUTWARDLY NEAR NORMAL. THERE SEEMS TO BE NO UNDUE ALARM OR APPREHENSION AMONG MOST EMBASSY SOURCES OR GENERAL POPULACE, WHO THROGGED BEACHES AND MOUNTAIN RESORT TOWN OF KENS COFF  
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SUNDAY IN USUAL NUMBERS.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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